

GOOD NEWS FOR THIRSTY SOULS

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A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."
Revelation 21:6.*

SALVATION is no small thing. It filled the heart and hands of the Son of God and therefore it ought not to be neglected by us. The precious promise before us concerns the gift of eternal salvation and it is set forth as the personal word of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The apostle is very careful to make this clear, for he inserts the words, "And He said unto me," as if John knew that poor, troubled hearts might doubt so large a promise were they not assured that Jesus Himself had expressly given it. John is a faithful and true witness. In this, as in another case, he could have written, "He knows that He says is true." He declares to us that He who is Alpha and Omega, Himself gave to him this word of promise. So especially careful was our Lord that the gospel of grace should be published correctly and without fail, that He delivered it Himself to John and also said to him, "Write: for these words are true and faithful." Not content with committing the message in words to the apostle, He charges him then and there to put it down in black and white that it might never be forgotten. Thus He proved that He assuredly meant what He said and meant that it should stand good through all ages, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." It is to be noticed, too, that our Lord spoke these words as a King, "He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new," and then He added, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Divine sovereignty, therefore, is not opposed to the most generous promises of the gospel. Jesus Christ may give or withhold as He pleases—but His will is to give. He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion, but the stern truth of His infinite sovereignty is coupled with the sweet declaration of boundless charity, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." However much we preach the doctrines of election and divine sovereignty, we never intend to limit the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, but as freely as if we had not believed in sovereignty to publish our Lord's generous gospel words, "Him that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out."

Again, the doctrine that salvation in us as well as for us is entirely the work of God is not opposed to the most open invitation to come to Christ, for the verse out of which we have culled our text begins thus, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end," that is to say, "I am the founder and finisher of salvation. I am the A and the Z of all life in the soul." This being accepted as sure truth, we may not therefore conclude that we are to be inactive till some miraculous work is worked upon us, for the promise is as true as the doctrine and it suggests immediate reception of Christ. "I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely," is an invitation to drink and it will be wise on our parts to accept it at once and drink to the full.

There is a splendid preface to this promise in the three words, "It is done." This indeed is the reason why grace can be so freely given. When our blessed Lord had completed His work on the cross, He cried, "It is finished," or, "It is done," and then the living stream flowed freely for the sons of men. Then was the rock riven with rivers. Then was the stone rolled away from the well's mouth. Then was the water of life made to gush from under the altar to refresh a barren world with its ever-deepening flood.

When this world's history is over—when the entire program of Christ's mediatorial work shall have been worked out, and this dispensation shall have come to an end, then our Lord from His throne shall say, "It is done," and this shall be sung to His glory, that He freely gave to thirsty souls of the fountain of the water of life.

I am most happy to have such a text to preach from! I pray the Lord to bless every word that shall be spoken and that every one of you—from those in the uppermost gallery, right away to those who crowd the far corners of the area—may come this morning to the celestial spring and drink and thirst no more. You have drank some of you many times. Come again and take draughts large and deep, for the fountain is as full as ever. Some of you spiritually may be like those described by Coleridge, “With throats unslaked, with black lips baked.” Your tongue cleaves to the roof of your mouth with faintness and anguish. You are burning with a strong desire and pressed with an urgent need. Come! Come and welcome! Hasten even before we enter into the sermon. Drink from the life-giving fount while we linger in the porch of these prefatory sentences. The words of the redeeming Lord invite you to partake of grace at once. O Holy Spirit, apply them with power to every heart.

There will be two heads of discourse at this time. The first is *explanation* and the second is *encouragement*.

I. The first is EXPLANATION. We shall only mention a few very simple truths. The first is that *all souls by nature are in great and dire want*. Our Lord here speaks of those who are “athirst,” and thirst is the index of one of our most pressing necessities. Many things we think we want and yet we live without them. But the need of which thirst is the expression is a very urgent one, involving the loss of all comfort and even of life itself, if it is not supplied. A traveler who had experienced both hunger and thirst said, “Hunger you may palliate, but thirst is awful.” He meant much by saying, “Thirst is awful.” There is no forgetting this pain and no staying it except by drinking. When thirst swoops down upon a man from out of a burning sky, whether he wanders upon an ocean of sand or brine, it is a woeful day for him. Has hell itself worse misery than to ask in vain for a drop of water to cool one’s tongue? The imagination of the ancients pictured Tantalus as athirst and mocked by water up to the chin which fled from him as he stooped. The pain of thirst is keen to the last degree and the desire to drink is intense beyond imagination. Want of water is a terrible want, but the want of grace is even more dreadful, yet such is the want of all our race. Every man by nature needs grace. He does not always know what he wants and indeed, many are so insensible that they do not feel their soul’s necessities. Yet those necessities are none the less urgent. There is a void within men which the whole world cannot fill. The experiment of filling the heart with the world has been tried and it has failed.

Alexander the Great, when he had conquered the known world, sat down and wept because there was not another world to conquer. Insatiable is the heart of man. You might as soon fill the bottomless pit. As the horseleech cries, “Give, give, give,” even so does man’s ravenous desire. If his soul’s thirst is not relieved, man must die as surely as though slain by the sword. To die of thirst is one of the most dreadful of deaths. May none of you perish with spiritual thirst. Dear souls, you need a Savior. You need the pardon of your sins. You need to be made anew in Christ Jesus and whether you know it or not, if you do not get these things you will die in your sins and therefore die eternally, which is the second death. If this thirst is not quenched, you are in a desperate plight indeed, for there is nothing before you but “a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation.”

Some persons begin to be conscious of their soul’s great need and these are they of whom the Savior speaks as “athirst.” They have a dreadful want and they know it. I sometimes meet with inquirers who, when they are invited to believe in Jesus, reply, “I do not feel my need enough. I wish to take the living water, but I am not thirsty enough.” I would have you know that frequently those are the most thirsty who thirst to thirst. If I know that I have a thirst, I at least have something. But if I am fearful that I do not even thirst, then my thirsting to thirst is a deeper thirst than thirst itself. I speak this way because of the infirmity of trembling hearts. Permit me to put this before you again. You complain that you have so hard a heart that you do not even feel it to be hard. This fact is a clear proof that yours is an especially hard heart and just so when you cry, “I desire to desire,” it is clear that you have an especially strong desire. Besides, let me remind you that no man living knows to the full his own need of a Savior. I suppose if we could altogether see our desperate condition by nature, or know to the full the heinousness of sin, we should become mad. Do not therefore ask to feel your need above measure, but thank God that you know your necessity so much as to apply to Jesus for His gracious supplies. Come and drink! Come and drink at the flowing fountain of love! For if you drink, you shall live, but a mere sense of need will not afford you relief.

Remember also that certain pains which are supposed to be a part of spiritual thirst are not necessarily connected with it. When a man is seeking Christ, it often happens that the devil comes in and suggests all manner of blasphemies and despairing thoughts. Do not be so foolish as to conclude that you are not thirsting after Christ because you have happily been free from these diabolical insinuations. They are not the work of the Spirit of God. They are malicious inventions of the devil and you are infinitely better without them than with them. I have heard of a convert who was years before he could trust the Savior because he thought himself to be so great a sinner that the Lord could not possibly save him. Do not imitate so bad an example. Unbelieving thoughts are no part of thirsting after Christ and they are not to be desired, but dreaded. Be very thankful if you can get to the Lord Jesus easily. It is a choice privilege. You know that you need Christ. You are sure that Christ can supply your need, therefore come and take Him without doubt or questioning. Simple unquestioning faith is the very best way to come to Jesus, for it gives us speedy comfort and yields to our Lord great honor. People are very foolish when they look upon the diseases of Christians as if they were beauties. Young children have a great many little complaints before they grow up to be men. I need not mention them. Every mother knows what a succession of troubles visit a numerous family. But suppose you knew one who had escaped these infantine disorders, what would you think of him if he were to murmur, "I don't think I can have been born. I don't think I can have life, for I never felt those complaints of infancy which other people speak of." You would say, "You silly man, you ought to be glad that you had such a healthy childhood."

Diseases are in a measure marks of life, for we may be sure that the dead do not suffer from them, but they are not necessary as proofs of vitality. Neither are doubts, despondencies, and despairs at all needful as tokens of regeneration. Do you need Christ? Do you desire Him? Do you seek Him? Then you are included in this text, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Do not look upon your thirst as a preparation for Christ, for thus you will be seduced into making a Christ out of your own needs and that will be ridiculous and ruinous. What would you think of a man who expected to find a remedy in his disease? He must be bereft of reason who expects to find an antidote within the poison. In our case we have to deal with an omnipotent Physician and however remarkable may be the development of our disease, the Lord Jesus knows the case and is able to overcome all the difficulties of it and bring us sound health. Therefore, come and trust Him. Do you perceive your nature's great and urgent want of Christ and do you desire Christ? If so, this text is for you, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."

Thirst is a desire arising out of a need. Now, so long as you have that desire, you need not stop to question your right to take Christ. A man is thirsty, even if he cannot explain what thirst is and how it comes. I must confess myself that I could not give you a physiological account of the origin and effect of the phenomenon of thirst. I suppose that certain organs which require moisture begin to dry up or collapse without it and so disarrange the functions and cause pain. If I were some learned anatomist I could give you a lecture upon the theory of thirst and yet, though I cannot do this, I know practically what thirst is as well as a doctor could tell me. When I am thirsty and am invited to drink, I do not refuse because I cannot explain my thirst. Nor is there any absolute necessity, in order to salvation, that you should know all about how it is that Christ can supply your needs. I may not be able to explain scientifically why this glass of water quenches my thirst, but I know that it does so. The liquid gets at the various organs and supplies them with what they require. I know enough about water to drink it when I am in need and practically, that is all that is wanted. If you know enough about Christ to understand that He can meet every need of your soul and if you take Him to be your all in all, the matter is done. Remember, Jesus Christ often saves poor, simple-minded men when He does not save philosophers. If you take the Lord Jesus to be yours, you shall as truly have the benefit of His salvation as if you were a father in Israel.

Let us notice once again that being thirsty is not enough. The text promises water from the fountain of life to the man who is athirst, but *thirst cannot quench thirst*. Some seekers act as if they thought it would. "Oh," they say, "I am not thirsty enough. I wish I felt my need more." But, my dear friend, your thirst will not be quenched by being increased. "I should have some hope," says one, "if I were more sensible of my danger." Yet that is not a gospel hope. Why should a man's despairing because of his danger operate to deliver him from danger? As long as you stop where you are, you may get more and

more sensible of danger until you reach the sensitiveness of morbid despondency, but you will be no nearer salvation. It is not your sense of need, it is Christ's power to bless you and your yielding yourself up to Christ that will bring you salvation. The remedy for the thirsty soul is very plainly hinted at in the text. What does a thirsty man do to get rid of his thirst? He drinks. Perhaps there is no better representation of faith in all the Word of God than that. To drink is to receive—to take in the refreshing draught—and that is all. A man's face may be unwashed, but yet he can drink. He may be a very unworthy character, but yet a draught of water will remove his thirst. Drinking is such a remarkably easy thing, it is even more simple than eating. I heard, the other day, of a sad, sad case of a man with cancer of the tongue who cannot eat. He has not taken solid nourishment for six months, but still he can receive food by drinking. When people are dying you can still moisten their lips. When nothing else can possibly pass their throats, they can receive liquid. So, dear soul, whatever your state may be, you can surely receive Christ, for He comes to you like a cup of cold water. Does not water run down the throat of itself? So is it with the gospel. Only be willing to open your mouth to have it and it is yours. Nothing is simpler.

Sometimes divines explain faith until nobody knows what it is and often and often I have known sinners look at their faith until they have quite forgotten to look to Jesus. This is as foolish as if a man desired to see a star and, having found a telescope, stood gazing *at* it instead of *through* it. Look how much he thinks of his telescope. He lengthens and shortens the tube and examines it up and down to see whether it is a good instrument. But he does not see the star! No, and he never will till he uses the telescope properly and looks through it. Do not think of believing in your own faith, but believe in Jesus. Subordinate faith to Christ? It would be ill indeed to prefer your cup to the fountain. When you want comfort, neither muse upon your need, nor study yourself, nor weigh your faith, but set your whole mind upon *Him* who is heaven's glory and the sinner's only hope. The essence of faith lies in having done with self and in receiving from without and that, not by any laborious process, but as easily as men receive water by drinking. We do not drink by machinery. We just open our mouths and allow the water to run down, even thus we receive Christ. Be willing to have grace, be ready, as it were, to imbibe it by the mouth of faith. O blessed faith, which is nothing of itself and yet enriches its possessor! O blessed grace, divine living water, which is ours as soon as we are willing to have it!

Surely there is sweet encouragement here to those poor souls who have said, "I cannot trust Christ. I dare not receive Him." You may freely receive Him and if you do but get Him, He will never take Himself away from you. If I were very, very thirsty and I found myself in your room and saw water on the table, I would not ask whether I might drink, I would drink first and ask you afterwards, knowing that you could not take it away from me after I had once drank it. A poor dog stands at the door of a butcher's shop. He sees meat, but he does not know whether he may have it. If he is very, very hungry, he makes a snatch at it and when he once gets it, he runs off to eat it, for he knows that although the butcher may take it away from him when it is in his mouth, he cannot take it from him after he has eaten it. Now then, needy ones, receive the grace of God into your inmost hearts. Receive Jesus into yourselves and there is no possibility that He will be taken away from you. Drink, thirsty one. Drink to the full. You can never be deprived of that which you have received into your inmost self.

Thus I have endeavored to explain the text. I hope I have not darkened what I wished to set in clearest light. O Spirit of God, make men see this open secret, this plain riddle of drinking at the fountain of grace!

II. We are to speak secondly by way of ENCOURAGEMENT. I am going to dwell upon this figure of thirst as it is used in the Scriptures, that I may lead every soul that feels its need of Christ to take Him at once. The first encouragement is this, *our Lord Jesus Christ keeps open house for all thirsty ones*. Kindly turn to the Word of God, for we must back up everything with Scripture this morning. Let us read the seventeenth verse of the twenty-second chapter of the Book of Revelation, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." No voice at Christ's door says, "Stay away," but three voices join with His in crying, "Come." The Spirit and the bride and he that hears, all cry, "Come." "Come." "Come." No officer stands at the door to sort out the comers and to say, "This one may come and the other may not," but the invitation is, "Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Said I not truly that Christ keeps open house? What can be more free or more comprehensive than this? Only publish

it in your neighborhood that you intend to keep open house for a day and everybody who comes may eat and drink what he likes at your expense. You need not advertise it many times in the newspapers. Only tell a few of the hungry brotherhood and they will swarm like bees. I will warrant you a full table from early dawn to the set of sun in any of our crowded quarters, if you will only provide the best meat and say, "Whoever will, let him come." How strange it is! How sadly strange, that our Lord Jesus keeps open house with better food than princes ever put upon a table and yet men will not come. They crowd for the bread of the body, but neglect their souls. Our Lord bids us go into the highways and hedges and compel men to come, for otherwise it seems they would rather perish with hunger and thirst than partake of the provisions of His grace. O, sirs, if you do perish, it is no fault of Christ's, for His table is furnished and the entrance to His banquet hall is free. In His name do I declare the absolute freeness of His grace. He has taken the doors from off the hinges to set His hall wide open. He has put away all sentinels from His table and ordained that none of His servants may hinder coming souls. Our orders are, "Whoever will, let him come," and it would be a plain violation of our Master's orders if we were to hinder any. His generous invitation is, "Come and welcome! Come and welcome! Come and welcome! Let him that is athirst, come, and whoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Now, as if it were not enough to keep open house, our Lord Jesus goes further, for in the next place, *He issues many invitations of the freest kind*. I will only quote one out of very many. Turn to the first verse of the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, "Ho! Everyone that thirsts, come to the waters and he that has no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Grace must be gratis. The word, "*freely*," in our text makes it clear that salvation is an absolute gift, but here the fact is put in a negative form that there may be no mistake whatever. Mercy is "without money and without price"—without price in any possible sense. We neither purchase, nor procure, nor earn, nor produce salvation by merit, effort, sacrifice, or service. It comes to us, not because we deserve it, but because we need it. We are blessed with it out of the goodwill and pleasure of the Lord and we do not purchase it by good deeds, good desires, or pious resolves, or persevering endeavors. We are empty and He fills us. In order that you may come to Jesus, no preparation is required. You may come just as you are and come at once. Only confess that you need Him, desire to have Him, and then take Him by trusting Him. He is like wine and milk, supplying delight and satisfaction, and you are to take Him as men would take a drink. How could the invitation be put more broadly than it is? How could it be uttered more earnestly? It has a, "Ho!" to give it tongue. Tradesmen in certain parts of London stand outside of their shops and cry, "Buy, buy!" Or call out, "Ho!" to the passers-by because they are anxious to sell their wares. Jesus is yet more eager to distribute His rich grace, for He longs to see men saved. Ho! You that pass by, stop here awhile. Turn your attention this way. Here is something worthy of your thoughts. "Ho! Everyone that thirsts, come to the waters and he that has no money." There are many such invitations in the Scriptures and if not all expressed by the same metaphor, they are all equally as free and as clear as the one before us. Jesus entreats men to look to Him and live. He bids them come to Him and find rest for their souls.

Does anyone say, "Well, I know that the ever-blessed Savior keeps open house and that He invites men freely, but still I am afraid to come"? Perhaps, dear friend, we may overcome your diffidence by the help of God if we remind you that *our Lord makes a proclamation* which has the weight of His personal dignity about it and comes as from a king. Turn to the seventh chapter of John, the thirty-seventh verse, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water." This is the sovereign Word of the King of kings. Standing up in the midst of the multitude, He proclaimed His own full and free salvation, and with His own voice He declared the day of grace, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." O anxious inquirer, what more do you need? I wish you could picture Jesus standing in our midst this morning and using such words! But if you cannot, if neither faith nor imagination can help you to realize His presence, still He is here and by the mouth of His servant He still cries to this great crowd gathered here, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." Will you not come? What is it keeps you back? The call is to any man, any woman, any child, anybody. Anyone that needs mercy, anyone who desires salvation, let him come and have Jesus and eternal life. If you think yourself an outcast, if you seem shut out with seven bolted doors, yet do

not take upon yourself the responsibility of condemning yourself. Come and try! If you thirst, come to Christ and He will give you grace at once.

Perhaps a trembler replies, “Yes! Here is a proclamation, but I should be more comforted if I could read *promises*.” Our text is one of the freest promises possible, “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.” Come and test the promise now and see if it be not true. But if you require another, turn to a grand gospel chapter in Isaiah, the forty-first and let me read you the seven-teenth verse. Will not this suit you? “When the poor and needy seek water and there is none and their tongue fails for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water.” Now then, you that cannot pray, you that are so dried up with inward drought that you cannot get the words out and scarcely feel the desires within. All you whose very hearts do fail you so that you despair of hope, believe this promise of God, who cannot lie and plead it before Him. See if God will not open for you fountains on the very mountain tops, where you could least expect them, and give you comfort which you looked not for. Shall I quote another promise out of many? There is a sound of abundant refreshment in it. It is in the forty-fourth of Isaiah, second verse, “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground.” He will not only give you enough to drink, but pour it on you to drench you with delight. Your hot and weary feet shall be ready to start again upon the journey of life, because washed and cleansed by love. There is grace enough in God to allow it to be *lavished upon you*. If I were in your case, poor thirsty soul, I would catch at such a promise as that. “Lord,” I would say, “I long to have You. I know I cannot be saved without You. I am sure that You can save me and lo! I trust You. If I die, I will die trusting in You!” You are saved, my brother. There is no fear that God will ever reject a soul that has come to this pass. He will pour floods upon you yet.

Our gracious Lord, still further to encourage souls to come to Him, has been pleased to give many *gracious explanations* of what He meant. You will find one in the fourth chapter of John. How sweetly He explained to the woman at the well what living water is and what drinking of it is. He tells you that, by believing in Him, you receive into yourself everlasting life. Further on, in the sixth chapter of John, at the thirty-fifth verse, He shows what drinking of the living water is, “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that comes to Me shall never hunger and he that believes on Me shall never thirst.”

I have opened up the plan of salvation many, many times, but I will try again. To be saved you must heartily trust Christ and Him alone. You are to believe *on* Him. First believe Him—that is, be convinced that what He says is true and then believe *on* Him—that is, depend upon what He has done and on what He is. He will make His Word good to you. Commit your soul to the Redeemer’s keeping and He will keep it safely—

***“Venture on Him; venture wholly;
Let no other trust intrude.”***

There is no venture, but I put it so that you may catch the idea. Lean your whole weight on Jesus. Hold on to Jesus as to a life buoy. Buckle your fate to Jesus, to sink or swim with Him. If He is a Savior, trust Him. Put all your eggs into this basket. Float all your treasures in this vessel. Let it be so that if He can and will save sinners He will save you. His Word is pledged that He will save all those who trust Him, accept that Word as infallible and confide all your future to its truth. This is the way of life. I tell you, beloved hearers, that my own personal hope lies altogether in the hand of my Lord and in no degree elsewhere. I have now known the Lord some thirty years or more and at this moment, if anyone should ask me what is my hope of eternal life, I can only answer that it is just what it was thirty years ago, namely, the work and death of the Lord Jesus in my room and stead. “Have you not preached the gospel for years?” Yes, I have, with all my might and I have by God’s blessing brought many thousands to repentance and faith, but I do not in the slightest degree rest my hope of heaven upon my preaching. Whatever the Lord enables me to do for Him is His doing and His work and He alone must have the glory of it. I dare not claim a grain of merit for it. I have only Christ to trust to and I want no more. I have no righteousness of my own, but I trust to free grace and dying love. The cross will float me into the port of peace. If it does not I must be lost, for every other lifeboat has gone to the bottom long ago. Christ Jesus is my hope and I am persuaded that He is a Savior as suitable for you as He is for me. You young man

over there, who is about the age which I had reached when I first trusted Christ, I pray you look to Him at once. Cease to be always looking to self. If you are thirsty, what is the good of looking down your own throat? What is the good of complaining that you feel too thirsty, or not thirsty enough? Man, rise up and drink! Poor sinner, get away from yourself to Christ and take Christ into yourself as a man takes water into his body by simply drinking it. Take Christ to be your own Savior. Receive Him to be your sole reliance and you are a saved man. His sacred Book declares the believer to be saved and if you, being a believer, are not saved, then none of us can have hope.

Furthermore, our blessed Lord, in order to make this very plain, has set before us *lively emblems*. He gives us the figure of the rock in the wilderness. You remember how He supplied Israel's needs from day to day till He brought them into rest? The sun blazed upon the desert sands and the pilgrims were sorely tried with thirst, so that they murmured and thought it better to die than to suffer such inward burning. How were their pains removed? Moses with his rod struck the rock and out leaped a stream of which they drank with eager joy. Can you not see them bowing down for a draught or holding their vessels at the place where first the water springs forth? Our Lord Jesus Christ is the smitten rock, from where flow life and refreshing to all who will accept the grace. All the need of your spirit, my hearer, will be supplied if you are willing to take of this water of life freely. Come, dip your earthen vessel into this heavenly river and thirst no more. A smitten Savior is the one hope of a sorrowing sinner. Read Psalm 107:5 and you will find another symbol, or rather the same in a fresh form. "They wandered in the wilderness, where there is no way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their souls fainted in them; then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and He delivered them out of their distresses." We are at this moment a great caravan traveling across this wilderness world. We are all in need and only God can supply us, but blessed be His name, that He will do if we cry to Him in our trouble and are willing to receive the grace which He gives us in Christ Jesus our Savior.

Beloved, the very cup of communion and the whole communion table itself is meant, among other gracious lessons, to teach us the way of salvation. Here is bread. What am I to do with it? Look at it? Study it? Analyze it? I may, if I choose, but that is not what it was meant for. It was intended to be eaten. Use it that way and you use it well. The wine, too, is meant to be drunk. It is not placed upon the table to be gazed upon, or to be quarreled over, or to be distilled, but to be drunk. This is an act which any thirsty person can perform. You poor souls who cannot do any good thing, surely you can receive of the food which your heavenly Father provides. If you cannot bear fruit and so give something out, you can take something in. If there is nothing in you, there is all the more room to receive of the divine fullness. Oh then, let the communion cup, concerning which the Savior said, "Drink"—let that tell you how to receive Christ, how to be saved by heartily accepting Christ.

Our Lord Jesus Christ in His wisdom has given us, in addition, many encouraging instances of men who have thirsted for grace. I will not detain you with many of them. We sang a part of the forty-second psalm this morning, where David said he longed for the living God as the hart pants after the water brooks. Further on in the sixty-third psalm, he cries, "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God," and a few verses down he sings, "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness." If you thirst after God you shall soon be satisfied. May your thirst increase until you get Him and then shall you be filled to the full.

Once more. Our Lord has been pleased to give His own special blessing to the thirsty ones, for, when He opened His mouth upon the mountain and gave out the benedictions which commence His memorable sermon, He said, "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Oh, then, you thirsty ones, you are blessed in your very desires and longings!

I do not know what more to say to you. What more could even inspiration utter? This blessed Book has set before you such a wealth of precious things that one can barely imagine more. What is wanted is that the truth be applied and that you do now come and take Christ. I beg you to recollect that you must take Christ by a personal act, each one for himself or herself. Each one must willingly believe, for God forces Christ on no one. If I am thirsty I must drink. No well or river can quench my thirst if I do not personally drink. It stands just thus, dear soul, you must accept Christ or you are lost. Be sure of this, that God Himself cannot, will not, save you unless you accept Christ. He is omnipotent, but He cannot act contrary to His own solemn declaration and He has said, "He that believes not shall be damned." If

you do not believe in Christ, you must be lost to a certainty. You must yourself believe or be a castaway. Do not think that the grace of repentance or faith will be worked in you against your will. You labor under a great mistake if you think so. You must joyfully take Christ or die in your sins. Why should you not take Him? Is this some bitter medicine I am pressing on you and are you a silly child who must be coaxed into taking it? No, I set before you the Lord Jesus who is sweetness itself. Why should you need persuading? Do you secretly hope that there may be some other salvation? You are greatly deceived if you do, for the Son of God would not have died to save if it could have been done in any other way. Of no other fountain can you drink. What keeps you back from this? Are you trying to find reasons why you should not come to Christ? That is ruinous to yourself. Few persons hunt up arguments against themselves. If there is any money in dispute in a court of law, each party will hunt out reasons for his having it, but I never saw a man stand up in court and plead against his own interests. Will you turn advocate for the devil against yourself? Will you urge arguments to seal your own condemnation? When Jesus Christ says, "Let him that is athirst come," will you stand in your own way and block up your own path to life? Will you give God the lie for the sake of destroying your own soul? Surely a mania must be upon you! It is the wisest thing to say, "I am an undeserving, hell-deserving sinner, but if God is infinite in mercy, why should He not save me as well as anyone else? He declares that if I trust His Son He will pardon me. I will trust His Son and partake of His forgiveness. He bids me drink of the water of life. I will drink. I will not question my right to come. He bids me do so and I will obey. I take Him at His Word. I trust in the blood of Jesus. Lord, receive me, for I receive Your Son. I have been trying to save myself and waiting until I felt something, or did something, in and of myself, but now, Lord, although I neither see nor feel anything but my lost estate, I do believe that Jesus can save me and I trust on Him."

If this is your true act, dear hearer, you are a saved man. Even if you only believed a minute ago, you have passed from death to life. The moment a sinner believes, he is justified. The atoning blood operates the moment faith sees it. O you who have but this instant believed, go your way and rejoice. You are in the hand of Jesus and none can pluck you from Him.

I have thus tried to preach a very plain sermon, containing the A B C of the gospel. I believe that God will bless it to the conversion of many. I shall be terribly disappointed if He does not. I have entreated Him to let His own message have free course and mighty effect and I know that He will hear me. I beg God's people to pray that this sermon may enclose within the gospel net more fish than ever we have had before. Some of you seekers have, up to now, thought the door of mercy to be bolted against you. See, it stands wide open. Come and welcome. If any softness of feeling is stealing over you, let it work while you gladly yield. Do not talk nonsense on the way home and so lose the effect of the discourse. Hasten to your chambers, fall upon your knees, and rise not till you have accepted Jesus as your own Savior. If you do so, salvation will have come to your house this day and God will be glorified. Amen and amen.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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